

TASK TWO (9 x 1 mark = 9 marks)

Read the following text. Choose the answer (a, b or c) which best fits according to the text. Then write your answer in the corresponding box of the questionnaire. Item 0 is an example.

MARK

***LAZY, DRUNKEN, PROMISCUOUS, RUDE: WHY THE UK
LOVES TO HATE YOUNG WHITE MEN***

New poll results suggest white men in their 20s have become the most derided social group in Britain

Young British white men are in trouble, it seems, as they are the most despised group in Britain, according to a series of polls into the public's attitudes to each other. British people expect young white men to get drunk, be lazy, rude and to have several sexual partners. It also appears that young white men are the demographic group least likely to go to university.

To be sure, the view that young white men are losing out picks up on real historical shifts. Until the 1960s most white working-class boys expected to learn manual skills from their older peers, often through apprenticeships or on-the-job training. Coalminers, engine drivers, shipbuilders and the like had a heroic resonance which was recognised – sometimes unwillingly – throughout British society. This was a world in which young white men, loyal members of trade unions, could feel self-respect and a sense that they were subordinate to no one.

Over the last 50 years this world has collapsed. Swaths of deindustrialisation have removed vast areas of skilled manual work, with their attendant cultures of respectability and autonomy, leaving young men having to navigate a casual and insecure labour market. Apprenticeship in its old forms virtually collapsed in the 1970s, after which point the only way to learn skills became through formal academic routes, where working-class boys fared relatively badly compared with middle-class kids. In place of white male working-class communities characterised by skill and pride, a new economy of insecure service-sector jobs offers very little in the way of security or self-respect.

The young working-class men of today have to learn to play by the rules of the game – and rules not of their own making – if they are to gain employment and make their way in the world. As a result, cultures of shame and redundancy have proliferated in many old industrial areas. This has been compounded by the decline of trade unions and the shift of the Labour party in search of middle-class voters.

Young white men might indeed feel that they have no obvious place in British society. The old bastions of white male working-class culture have been gentrified. In place of the traditional routine of the factory whistle blowing at noon on Saturday, and the men going to football matches at 3 p.m. after lunch in the pub, football has become a modern bastion of the middle and upper classes, characterised by expensive tickets and corporate hospitality.

However, there is more to it than this. We should not think that getting to university is a passport to a secure and lucrative career. What matters now is the kind of institution that you attend. In the 1970s, when only 10% of young people went to universities, attendance at any institution was prized and seen to be a marker of social mobility. In an era of mass higher education, with more than 40% of young people going to university, there is huge internal stratification within higher education. It is access to elite universities, especially Oxbridge and the "golden triangle" of elite London colleges, that conveys the most advantages. These elite universities continue to be bastions of largely white privilege. Black and ethnic minorities by contrast, especially British-born minorities, are more likely to be concentrated in new universities where there are fewer resources and where graduate prospects, especially for high-level professional and managerial jobs, are considerably worse.

Similar issues arise for gender inequality. While women now outnumber men among university students, and while they have succeeded in moving into some highly sought-after professional pathways – such as in law and medicine – they are still very much the minority in some prestigious academic specialisms which lead to well-paid careers – engineering, information technology,

economics, and science-based subjects more generally. Although women have improved their position compared with men, there continue to be striking inequalities, especially at the highest levels. When the details of the *YouGov* poll are examined, a much more complicated picture emerges, and there is ample evidence for the power of racism. The group which the public sees as least honest and most violent is young Pakistani men, with young black Caribbean men, Polish middle-aged men and Muslim men also scoring lower here than young white men. The message is therefore much more complicated than that young white men form the most marginal group in Britain today. As the clear boundary between the world of manual working class and non-manual middle class fades, middle-income groups become unsure where they stand. These uncertainties can be mobilised against a variety of groups seen to be beyond the pale and which can therefore be scapegoated to give a sense of reassurance to those who can position themselves in a more positive light. Racism, sexism and classism are alive and kicking in Britain today: as inequality increases, so does the hostile stereotyping and marginalisation of those at the bottom.

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0. Young British white men are in trouble because

- a) ***the public's opinion about them is not favourable enough.***
- b) *they are considered too promiscuous and less intelligent.*
- c) *they are the least respected social group in Britain.*

a
✓

8. Before the 1960s, white working-class men

- a) had gained self-respect through independence from trade unions.
- b) used to criticise their older workmates for their lack of support.
- c) were respected, although reluctantly, for their skills.

9. An emerging economy based on deindustrialisation

- a) has undermined prestige in the working class.
- b) offers some security and self-respect in the service-sector jobs.
- c) prioritises apprenticeship over academic learning.

10. If today's working-class youngsters want to reach the job market, they should

- a) adapt to the new circumstances.
- b) make their own rules and play by them.
- c) overcome their feeling of shame.

11. Young white men may feel displaced because

- a) the football tickets have skyrocketed.
- b) the Labour Party has turned their back on them.
- c) the upper-, middle- and working-class habits have shifted.

12. In today's British society, going to university

- a) has stopped being a sign of social mobility.
- b) is a sign of social prestige.
- c) may guarantee a good job.

13. A growing internal stratification within higher education

- a) grants more privileges to favoured elitist groups.
- b) has caused even more overcrowding at universities.
- c) is the result of elitist college education in the vicinity of London.

14. What most affects one's chances to be professionally successful is

- a) one's racial background.

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- b) the ethnic minority one belongs to.
 - c) the kind of university one goes to.

15. When compared with men, women

- a) are the majority at British universities.
- b) have achieved equality in most sought-after scientific fields.
- c) have already excelled in well-paid careers.

16. The overall message of the poll is that

- a) any marginalised social group can fall victim to stereotyping.
- b) racism and ageism are still extremely powerful in Britain.
- c) young white men are not the most despised social group.

soluciones

TASK 2: LAZY, DRUNKEN, PROMISCUOUS, RUDE: WHY THE UK LOVES TO....

TEXT	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
HEADING	C	A	A	C	A	A	C	A	A